

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAVID R. HINSON, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, CONCERNING FAA NON-TECHNICAL TRAINING. MARCH 30, 1995.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the training programs of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). From the outset, I want to stress four key points to the Subcommittee.

First, Gregory May training, which has been highlighted by the media and was the key feature of the Inspector General (IG) report, was suspended by Secretary Peña when he first heard complaints about this training over two years ago. I also discontinued last year a diversity training course after learning of objectionable elements.

Let there be no doubt: there is no place at the FAA for the training practices described in the IG report or recently portrayed in press accounts. It is simply unacceptable to subject individuals to irresponsible training techniques, and not one cent of taxpayer money should be spent on this kind of activity.

Second, the IG conducted the investigation at the request of Secretary Peña, and upon receiving the IG's report, the Secretary and I initiated action to evaluate the IG's 17 recommendations. We are now implementing these recommendations. In fact, even before the IG's report was completed, we had already issued improved training procurement procedures and made critical changes, including a new manager, at the FAA's Center for Management Development (CMD).



Third, despite misleading press reports, aviation safety in no way has been compromised by these training programs. FAA employees are among the finest and most dedicated public servants in the government. They staff our nation's air traffic control towers and centers, certificate our air carrier airports, provide for the security of our air transportation system, maintain the radars and landing systems, inspect the safety of our aircraft, and provide flight services to pilots throughout this country. They have allowed the FAA to attain a sustained safety record that is the envy of the world.

Fourth, our training programs--both technical and nontechnical--are critical to the success of the FAA. The Subcommittee and the FAA must work together to ensure that FAA employees have the training necessary to meet the challenges of the future. It would be a tragic error to let the training mistakes of the past stop us from providing the training our employees need to enhance aviation safety in the future.

I will now turn to these four points in greater detail.

Gregory May & Associates conducted training courses from May 1984, to February 1993 for the FAA. There were four basic courses. FAA senior managers and SES executives attended. The core program was a 2-week "Executive School," followed by a 1-week "Executive School Phase II". Over that 10-year period, approximately \$1.67 million was spent on all training conducted by Gregory May.

Shortly after being sworn in as Secretary of Transportation, Secretary Peña learned of complaints about training practices associated with Gregory May & Associates. The Secretary promptly suspended the training and directed the Inspector General to initiate an investigation of these training complaints. No training has been provided by Gregory May & Associates to either FAA or DOT in the past 2 years.

Upon receiving the Inspector General's report several weeks ago, the Secretary and I promptly initiated action to evaluate its 17 recommendations for improving the conduct of FAA training. Today, we are implementing those recommendations. Before the IG's report was completed, as I noted a moment ago, we had already issued improved training procurement procedures and brought in a new CMD manager, Dr. Woodie Woodward, who holds a doctorate in University Administration and Personnel Management from the University of Kansas. A new contractor was employed at CMD, and we revamped the courses. CMD also underwent college accreditation, and today is accredited by the American Council on Education, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

To ensure that we are progressing as far and as fast as possible, we have also initiated an additional review of CMD's training content and expenditures. A team of independent, outside experts will review our programs at CMD and recommend any additional steps necessary to bring improvements. We have improved our oversight of CMD course development, and structured a program to evaluate CMD and FAA Academy training. These steps are the leading edge of making FAA management training the outstanding training that it should be. The IG recommendations are consistent with our efforts.

Consistent with the IG report, we are taking additional steps. The Secretary has established a committee to review all departmental training, course content, and expenditures. We are providing a new management team to head our human resource organization and will be holding special training on ethics and conduct for FAA human resource managers.

We are also tightening up our practices with regard to training procurement. We already require that 3 bids be made for training contracts below \$25,000, and that the FAA

contracting officer must have completed a 32 hour small-purchase course before being granted the authority to make small-purchase contracts. We are also placing renewed emphasis on existing restrictions on contractors, prohibiting contractors from using their governmental training courses to solicit participation in private, non-governmental training courses and requiring all consultants and contractors to document background qualifications. These steps are intended to ensure that only high-quality trainers with appropriate academic credentials be allowed to train federal employees.

In turning to the third point concerning aviation safety, I want to share my frustration with the Subcommittee about press reports which seemed to suggest that this training compromised aviation safety. It is unfair to FAA employees, the aviation industry, and the traveling public to make such unsubstantiated charges.

The FAA's record over the past ten years shows steady and major improvement as reflected in accident and incident reports. Accident rates are down for air carriers, commuter aircraft, air taxis and general aviation. And reported near midair collisions have sharply declined--from 1058 in 1987, to 286 in 1994.

This does not mean to suggest that everything works perfectly at the FAA or that we haven't faced difficult issues. But, in pushing our reforms at the FAA, my Deputy, Linda Daschle, and I have always found a willingness to take on these challenges. The recently announced commuter rule is just one more example of our guiding principle: zero accidents.

In pursuing the goal of zero accidents, technical and nontechnical training is critical. The FAA, as a worldwide technical safety agency, spends about \$250 million each year on training its workforce of over 47,000 employees. The vast bulk of that training--or about

95%--focuses on ensuring that the technical workforce has the up-to-date technical and safety-related skills needed to perform to the exacting levels demanded by the traveling public.

The FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, for example, provides over 1400 technical training courses, and last year served over 15,000 resident students, while providing computer-based and correspondence training to another 12,000 employees. This year, the Academy will train about 350 new flight standards and aircraft certification inspectors, approximately 11,000 FAA pilots, inspectors, and maintenance personnel, and over 2,000 air traffic controllers. There will be newly-developed training for security inspectors in international airport inspections and crisis management, and initial technical training on new equipment for more than 200 engineers and technicians.

The remaining 5% of our training budget is devoted to executive, managerial, supervisory, and staff development training, primarily at CMD. The training at issue in the IG's report was less than .4% of FAA's total training budget. I cite these statistics only to put the training in perspective, not to justify the expenditure of funds for that purpose.

Executive and management training are integral to effectively managing government agencies or corporations, particularly those as large as the FAA. Just as it is critical for our technical employees to be trained in their disciplines, the mid-level and senior people we charge with providing leadership and direction must similarly be trained in teamwork, fiscal prudence, planning, budgeting, labor relations, and the other skills and knowledges so important to helping achieve the agency's goals. Our executive and managerial training programs are designed to instill and sharpen these vital skills. As a former executive in the private sector, I can tell you that this kind of training is considered fundamental to

organizational success, and represents a responsibility where appropriate resources must be committed.

Appropriate diversity training is also key to managing a successful corporation. Companies like Amoco realize that we must take full advantage of every single person. The Chairman of Nations Bank has gone even further, saying the failure to embrace diversity is limiting many American corporations. For him, the business imperative is clear: "Understand diversity or fail". To my mind, a small investment for helping our senior managers better manage diversity is a wise investment.

I would also stress that the training we conduct for our executives is particularly important to the FAA in an era of government downsizing. We need a management cadre that is skilled and can handle the difficult transition as we streamline our agency and reorganize to better meet customer demands and public concerns. The knowledge that we can impart to our supervisors and managers through their training at CMD and in appropriate executive level training is essential to helping us perform our critical safety work. I mentioned several steps that we have taken to improve the quality of our management training. However, I am not satisfied with just being "good," or "adequate". We intend to create, develop and implement training programs that will be the benchmark of management excellence.

Let me close by saying, Mr. Chairman, that we are taking the IG report and its recommendations very seriously. Although the training problems found by the IG resulted from training decisions that preceded our appointments to the Department and the FAA, the Secretary and I are fully committed to putting in place the right processes to ensure this type of training cannot reoccur. I have too much respect for the dedication and contributions of FAA employees to do anything else. We look forward to working closely



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with the Subcommittee as we progress in our efforts to shape an improved framework for non-technical training that provides meaningful and appropriate training to FAA employees in the most cost-effective way.

That completes my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have at this time.